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TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Richard Shumsky *RS*
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SUBJECT: SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS FOR JUVENILE HALLS

This report is in response to the Board's concerns resulting from the recent escape incidents from juvenile halls. The focus of this report is on the corrective actions to ensure security during transportation, and issues specific to the housing and programs of the high-risk population of minors declared unfit for juvenile court.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION

Probation has taken the following corrective actions to enhance security by Probation Transportation:

- The elimination of transportation to private appointments except for acute conditions requiring specialty medical care for which a Probation manager has provided individual transport authorization.
- Increased security during all outside transportation, including mandatory use of shackles and waist chains.
- Development of an agreement with the Sheriff to perform medical and court transportation needs for unfit minors, and review Probation's transportation policies and practices.
- Consideration of a role for the Sheriff to provide security within and/or around designated portions of juvenile halls, and to provide a tactical response team.

SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS FOR UNFIT MINORS' HOUSING AND PROGRAMS

Probation is in the process of implementing additional security enhancements for unfit minors' housing and programs including:

- Housing all unfits at BJNJH in the most secure units.
Constructing a fenced, secure recreation area adjacent to the unfits' living units.
Designing modular classroom facilities within the secure fencing.
- Developing protocols to provide education in the secure confines of the units as a temporary enhancement until construction of modular classrooms is complete.
- Implementing technology to record unfit minors' telephone calls, and to allow staff to monitor calls.
- Implementing measures relative to the hardening of unfit minors' living unit control centers, strengthening staffing assignments, and developing enhanced training for staff working with unfit youths.

Included as Attachment 1 of this report are additional details of our proposed security enhancements. Included as Attachment 2 is the status and anticipated implementation date for each recommendation generated from the Sheriff's review of our facilities, along with recent security enhancements developed by Probation. We will keep your Board informed of additional security needs that may be identified, and of our progress implementing security enhancements.

Attachments (2)
RS:rgs

REPORT ON SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE JUVENILE HALLS

TRANSPORTATION

Probation transports over 80,000 youths each year, primarily for court or medical appointments, and between juvenile halls and camps. Youths are also transported to group homes, to relatives, and to living arrangements in other counties or states. Approximately 60 youths are transported each month to private medical, dental or psychiatric appointments. Private appointments are usually requested by a minor's family for specialty care or to see a specific physician.

The Probation Department has experienced an increase in escapes and other incidents involving detained minors, including a significant number of incidents involving unfit minors. The increase in the number of escapes and the rise in gang homicides in Los Angeles County are indicative of an overall increase in the criminal sophistication level of detained juveniles. Some of these youths face trials in adult court, and potential long periods of incarceration in State Prison. Laws enacted over the past few years have stiffened sentencing, and expanded the categories of crimes and ages for which youths may be tried in adult court. Thus, high-risk offenders have a greater overall willingness to use desperate or violent acts to avoid long prison sentences.

Transportation of youth outside the secure perimeter of juvenile halls results in increased security concerns because of the greater opportunity for escape. The general public, a minor's family, criminal associates, or rival gang members could potentially have direct contact with the minor while (s)he is in transit. Transportation Deputies (TDs) do not carry firearms, and are not in uniforms.

The Probation Department has implemented a new policy to prohibit the transportation of minors to private medical or dental appointments, and is enhancing security relative to instances when it will remain necessary to transport minors outside of juvenile halls. Effective immediately minors will not be transported out of juvenile halls for private appointments except:

- Minors transported for emergency care, or
- Minors scheduled by the Department of Health Services – Juvenile Court Health Services (DHS-JCHS) for County hospital or County clinic care, or
- Minors referred by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for emergency care or admission to a locked psychiatric facility.

Recommendation

Minors will not be transported out of juvenile halls or camps for private appointments except:

- Minors transported for emergency care, or
- Minors scheduled by the Department of Health Services – Juvenile Court Health Services for County hospital or County clinic care, or
- Minors referred by the Department of Mental Health for emergency care or admission to a locked psychiatric facility.
- Minors with specific acute conditions for which a private specialist is in the best interest of medical care.

The potential exists for violent acts during the transportation of a desperate unfit minor. This potential increases in conjunction with the increase in sophistication of unfit minors. Probation's TDs provide most of the non-emergency transportation needs of minors attending appointments outside of juvenile halls. In conjunction with the Sheriff Department, Probation is evaluating the use of Sheriff's Deputies to transport high-risk offenders and unfit minors.

Recommendation

2. Probation explore the use of Sheriff's Deputies to transport high-risk offenders and unfit minors

The Sheriff Department picks-up unfit minors from Central Juvenile Hall (CJH) for transport to adult court. Since the transfer of the majority of unfit minors to Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall (BJNJH), Probation and the Sheriff have been collaborating to arrange for the Sheriff to transport unfits directly from BJNJH to adult court. In the interim, Probation has been transporting minors from BJNJH to CJH shortly before their adult court appearance date for subsequent pick-up by the Sheriff. Probation will be implementing a wristband system requirement of the Sheriff, and links to the Sheriff's inmate movement tracking system, so the Sheriff can provide direct pick-up at BJNJH.

Recommendation

3. Probation collaborate with the Sheriff to expedite pick-up of unfit minors directly from BJNJH for transport to adult court

Minors have the opportunity to communicate with individuals outside of juvenile halls through the telephone, mail, visitors, and to other minors who are subsequently released. Appropriate action needs to be taken to restrict external communication with detained minors.

Limited telephone privileges are provided to minors to promote their rehabilitation and family reunification. Minors generally are permitted to make calls at designated times from collect-call-only telephones. Probation staff have only limited ability to confirm the identity of the person receiving the call, and those on the receiving end of the call can forward calls or establish three-way connections to link the minor with others.

Probation is reviewing technology options and legal issues relative to monitoring and recording of detained youths' telephone conversations, and will implement appropriate measures based on our findings. In the interim, minors will not be allowed to use the telephone or have visitors when they know of an appointment, and minors will not have an expectation of privacy while they are on the telephone except when speaking with fiduciaries such as their attorney or clergy. Probation staff will also peruse all incoming and outgoing mail, and seek to block three-way calling capability. These and other security enhancements will be incorporated into policy and procedure manuals, and included in ongoing scripted staff training.

Recommendation

4. Probation will implement appropriate measures to monitor and/or record all telephone conversations of detained minors (other than legally privileged calls), and peruse all incoming and outgoing mail.

Issues that should be considered when evaluating if transport to a private appointment is appropriate include foreknowledge of the appointment, necessity of private versus County services, alternative providers, and consideration of the relative risk each patient presents to the community.

Probation has previously recommended that additional specialty health services be provided within the secure perimeter of juvenile halls to eliminate much of the need for external transport of minors. The majority of external health-related transport is for OB/GYN, orthopedic, dermatology, and eye services.

To date we have not had the success we would hope for in securing these services in-house. Our efforts have been hampered by the unavailability of specialists, and infrastructure limitations. We are developing a specialized living unit for male minors with need for intensive psychiatric services to avoid their transport to external psychiatric facilities. A similar unit for females is already available. We continue to work with our DHS and DMH partners to bring specialty medical services to detained minors.

Recommendation

5. Probation, DHS, and DMH coordinate efforts to bring specialty medical and mental health services for detained minors within juvenile halls.

HOUSING OF MINORS PENDING FITNESS HEARINGS

The District Attorney has the discretion to prosecute in adult court certain crimes attributable to juvenile defendants. The juvenile defendants are considered "unfit" for juvenile court due to the serious and/or violent nature of their alleged criminal act. These acts are often referred to by Welfare and Institutions Code section "707(b)," that specifies violent crimes for which juveniles may be prosecuted in adult court.

All of the recent escapees except one were either unfit, or were awaiting transfer to the CYA. Because of their higher risk, all unfit minors are now housed at BJNJH, and are moved when necessary to CJH to attend court or medical appointments. Probation is currently housing 104 unfit minors. Unfit minors who become a distraction or disturbance to juvenile hall operations are returned to adult court to seek judicial approval to be remanded to the Sheriff's jail. The Sheriff is currently housing 42 unfit minors.

Minors classified as unfit have demonstrated their willingness to commit the most serious criminal acts, generally are more criminally sophisticated, and have a greater incentive to flee to avoid long-term incarceration. Probation is transferring minors pending fitness hearings to BJNJH because of similar concerns for their incentive to flee.

Recommendation

6. Probation transfer minors pending fitness hearings to BJNJH.

PHYSICALLY SEPARATING CONTROL CENTERS

Each juvenile hall living unit includes a staff control center that is equipped with varying types of security features such as panic buttons or knock-off telephones, security cameras, and handcuffs. The control centers generally provide a central observation point from which most activity in a living unit can be observed. Control centers are manned by a designated staff on-duty at all times. Activities within the living unit are coordinated from the control center.

Access to the control center by minors is restricted only by policy and staff supervision, not by physical barriers. Control centers are not physically restricted

because of a generally accepted industry philosophy that staff should be among detained minors, and minors should be housed in the least-restrictive setting based on the level of a minor's criminality.

Unfit minors have demonstrated their willingness to implement plans of escape or otherwise attempt to compromise security. Restricting their movements and programs reduces the potential success of these plans. However, as minors perceive that their avenues for escape are limited, they may turn to a violent takeover of a living unit as a means of escape.

Probation will be expediting the enclosure of the control center within each living unit housing unfit minors to reduce minors' ability to exit a living unit even if staff are overpowered. In the interim, control center doors in unfit minors' living units will remain locked at all times. Control center window glass will be reinforced to prevent breakage, and the glass will be mirror-tinted to prevent minors from seeing control center staff. Thus, one staff will always be within a physically enclosed area that minors cannot access or see into. If a security event develops, the control center staff will be able to summon assistance, and minors will be unable to exit the building.

Probation is considering the establishment of a Sheriff's operation within the juvenile halls to coordinate all matters pertaining to security of living units for unfit minors. In addition, we are developing an agreement with the Sheriff for a tactical response should a major disturbance occur.

Probation will be equipping each staff working in living units housing unfit minors with two-way radios and personal panic alarms. These alarms will be worn on the staffs' clothing, and signal staff assigned to juvenile hall security positions. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitoring cameras will also be installed in the unfits' units so juvenile hall security staff can monitor activity occurring in high-risk areas.

In conjunction with this effort to restrict entry to the control center, Probation is exploring the replacement of two-way keyed door locks with electronic locks in unfit units that can only be opened either by the control center staff, or with a key from the exterior. This will prevent a mass escape attempt that would likely be part of a living unit takeover plan. Probation will also be reviewing the type of window glass in unfit living units to ensure it is shatterproof.

Recommendations

7. Probation enclose control centers in living units housing unfit minors, and immediately implement policy that control center doors in these living units remain locked.

8. Probation consider the establishment of a Sheriff's operation within the juvenile halls to enhance security of living units for unfit minors, an additional Sheriff's operation to provide a roaming perimeter presence and coordinate all matters pertaining to security of unfit minors, and develop an agreement with the Sheriff for a tactic response in the event of a major disturbance.
9. Probation fast-track installation of CCTV monitoring cameras in the unfit's units so juvenile hall security staff can monitor activity occurring in high-risk areas.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY FOR UNFIT MINORS

Probation is reviewing additional security options for unfit youths. We have been working with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the State Board of Corrections to expedite the planning and engineering for a security fence to surround the unfit minors' living units at BJNJH. These plans include movement of subterranean utilities, and installation of modular classrooms to alleviate the need to move unfit minors to the same school campus as the general population. We will work with the Internal Services Department (ISD) and DPW to ascertain opportunities to bypass normal procurement protocols to hasten installation of these security improvements.

Recommendation

10. Probation work with its DPW and ISD partners to fast-track previously approved security enhancements at BJNJH, including if necessary temporarily bypassing some procurement procedures.

A team from the Sheriff's Department recently completed security audits of our three juvenile halls. Probation is appreciative of expertise and assistance the Sheriff has provided to strengthen our security. The majority of the Sheriff's recommendations do not involve major capital outlay, and will be implemented as rapidly as possible. We will seek additional funding sources for capital-intensive recommendations, or implement compensating controls if applicable. Sheriff's experts will also be conducting a review to strengthen our transportation policies and procedures.

Recommendation

11. Implement as rapidly as possible security enhancements recommended by the Sheriff as part of his security audit of the juvenile halls, and work with the Sheriff to strengthen transportation policies and procedures.